

11: Haguenaue--41 T-3  
116, 774, 775

(no date) 1929

Formosan Aborigines  
Atayal

The Tayal believe that there is no complete separation between the worlds of the living and the dead. For the Formosan natives, the living man is characterized by the fact that he shelters one or several spirits in his body. But these spirits have a distinct life, and they may leave the body for a time or permanently. In the latter instance the body decays, and the individual dies. The spirit (or spirits) continues to live at liberty until it reincarnates itself.

11: Haguenaue--41-42 T-3  
116, 602, 775, 842

(no date) 1929

Formosan Aborigines  
Atayal

The Tayals' ideas about birth are no more scientific than their thoughts concerning death. However surprising this may seem, they do not look upon a child as the simple result of conjugal relations, for they believe that birth can only be achieved when a soul is reincarnated in the body of a woman in the tribe. Therefore the spirits are closely associated with the existence of the living. The community and the clan are literally a group of souls some of which are imprisoned in bodies, while others are free, but all of them are serving the clan. [42] The community increases in strength in proportion to the number of the souls who are interested in its fate.

11: Haguenuer--42  
116, 602, 609, 721, 775

T-3

(no date) 1929

Formosan Aborigines  
Atayal

The victim of a head hunt was always a stranger, and they cut off his head to liberate his soul. By apologizing to it and offering it wine and millet, the soul was enslaved so that it would serve the clan. And this conquered soul added one more unit to the community, which now had an additional voice in the kingdom of the spirits. This reasoning is also applied to animals. The savage collects the skulls of the beasts which he has slain; by doing this he believes that he increases his power over them, and that he ensures good hunting for the future.

11: Haguenaue--45-46  
116, 775

T-3

(no date) 1929

Formosan Aborigines  
Atayal

The soul is lodged in a part of the body, generally in the pupil of the eye, or in the shoulder, but at death it leaves the body. The corpse is buried in the house between the beds. The spirit flies west in the direction of the abode of the souls. The road leading there is a long and dangerous one, and on the way you have to cross a broad pond. It is true that there is a bridge, the rainbow (the "bridge of souls" in Tayal), but not all of the spirits are authorized to [46] cross it. Only those of the warriors who have taken heads and of women who know how to weave nicely are admitted. The other spirits have to make a long detour. The souls of people who died a violent death or who were drowned are never admitted, and they are condemned to wander through the forests. They attack the living, and make them sick, so to get rid of them you have to have recourse to magic remedies. Other mischievous spirits fly over the surface of the swamps; they are the "souls-fire", which are rather like our will-o'-the-wisps. Anyone who sees them will die. We should observe that according to the native belief, the fact that the abode of the dead is a long way away does not prevent these souls from coming back among the living; on the contrary, the aborigines think that the spirits who are attracted by offerings return very rapidly.

16: Müller--236-237 U-3  
116, 775, 828

(no date) 1910

Formosan Aborigines

The aborigines of Formosa...hold the following beliefs:

1. Death destroys only the body; the soul remains immortal.
2. Dreams are due to the souls of departed which appear to the dreamer in his sleep. [237]
3. The souls of the departed inhabit certain definite places, in the forest, under a tree, or in imaginary places.
4. The spirits of the departed influence the fate of human beings for good or evil, and all fortune or misfortune is dependent on them.

16: Müller--237 U-3  
116, 774, 775

(no date) 1910

Formosan Aborigines

The religion... of the aborigines is founded on a belief in spirits, although these are not represented by idols or other tangible images. Phenomena of nature, such as the sun, moon, and stars, bear a relation to these concepts in their imagination, since these are thought to represent a special kind of soul. A rainbow is a bridge for spirits, the pulse is the soul of the hand. Wherever one goes one is surrounded by spirits. Even shadows represent spirits. Closely connected with this is their belief in ghosts; these are believed to have the appearance of human beings, with long hair and long, claw-like nails, and they jump up and down. They bite people's necks. This belief is held by the Ataiyal aborigines. Those of the Tsarisen tribes believe that the mountains are inhabited by dwarfs who challenge human beings to fight with them.

16: Müller--237 [2]  
116, 753, 791, 775, 787

U-3

(no date) 1910

Formosan Aborigines

The belief in the evil power of spirits is deeply rooted in native imagination. Sickness and other misfortunes are all believed to be the work of evil spirits. If one is careful, however, one may recognize the signs of his approach. The flight of birds or their call, even sneezing or gas in the stomach are thought to be signs of the presence of spirits. With the aid of soothsayers and dream specialists it is possible sometimes to escape their evil designs. Once they have taken hold of their victim, however, it is difficult to elude their grasp.

16: Müller--241 U-3  
116, 789, 775

(no date) 1910

Formosan Aborigines

Since the aborigines of Formosa are extremely superstitious, it is only natural that they have other reasons for headhunting. Its function in trial by ordeal has already been discussed. Among some tribes of the Ataiyal group, headhunting is also a necessary preparation for the festivals in honor of ancestors. It is also used as a kind of fetish for exorcizing evil spirits. Some of the aborigines believe that the soul of the man who has been killed in this way becomes subject to the power of the man who has killed him.

17: Norbeck--28-29  
773, 775

(no date) 1950

Formosan Aborigines  
Atayal

[MC: For paradise myth, story of the journey of the soul after death, and the judgement of the dead, see category 539.]

18: Kakyo--71 [2]  
116, 775, 828

E-2

(no date) 1899

Formosan Aborigines

1. The natives of Formosa are able to distinguish between sleep and death.
2. They believe that death destroys only the body, but that the soul is immortal.
3. They believe that a dream is the appearance of the soul of a dead person.
4. They believe that the soul leads a happy existence in a definite place.
5. They look on the spirits of the dead as a kind of "evil powers."

18: Kakyo--71 [3]  
116, 775, 769

E-2

(no date) 1899

Formosan Aborigines

The distress and the happiness, the fortune and misfortune of all men are attributed by the Formosan aborigines to the influence of these devilish forces. [MC: i. e., spirits of the dead.].

To attain happiness and ward off misfortune, they honor the spirits of their ancestors.

This enables us to recognize that the Formosa natives are already on the way to developing a cult of their ancestors.

21: Asai--3 [4]  
116, 775

L-5

(1935-46) 1950

Formosan Aborigines

"Immortality is believed in. The soul will live eternally and after death the souls live in other worlds. They have a concrete idea of a land of death and know the direction of the land. The direction is usually the place of their origin. They people believe in multiple souls."

21: Asai--4  
116, 775, 776

L-5

(1935-46) 1950

Formosan Aborigines  
Yami

"The Yami believe in four souls. They say that their souls often go to visit a friend during a dream. The Yami have a distinct idea of gods and they have the idea of several heavens, but this is exceptional among Formosan tribes."

21: Asai--4 [4] L-5  
116, 721, 761, 775, 778

(1935-46) 1950

Formosan Aborigines

"The cult of headhunting was very general in Formosa, but at present it is engaged in very rarely. They believe in two kinds of death, natural and accidental. In natural death, the soul goes to the land of death where it lives peacefully. In the case of accidental death, the soul does not go to the land of death but must wander around the spot where the person was killed. If the heads of the enemy are taken and brought back to the house, then the soul of the person killed will stay in that place peacefully. Such heads have mana and aid in growth of crops. Therefore, it is good to have as many heads as possible. They are offered food and wine on various occasions."

34: Del Re--58-59  
116, 775

U-4 (no date) No Date

Formosan Aborigines  
Yami

"It is worth noting that the Yami--unlike most of the main-island tribes who have no traditions concerning a creator of the world and believe that it will continue for all eternity--do not appear to have any idea of an after-[59] life or of retribution, such as is found, for instance, among the Tayals who believe that those who have done evil will be punished, and those who have done good will enter, through a narrow gate placed at the end of a steep and difficult path, into a kind of paradise. None of the planes of the Yami cosmos are in the nature of retributory abodes after death, akin to the place of voluptuous pleasures and of filth assigned to the good and the bad by certain tribes (27),

27. VF, Pt. I, p. 12.

which suggest eschatological ideas of Chinese origin."

39: Wiedfeldt--14,15  
116, 555, 761, 775

F-3

(1913) 1917

Formosan Aborigines  
Atayal

According to their ideas, worthy [15] people live on after death. Such persons would include successful skull-hunters and women skilled at weaving. Hence, worth does not include merely the manly virtues... The dead cross the sea to the "great land" by way of the rainbow, and in the process, the unworthy, that is, those who are not tattooed, fall into the sea, or are cast down among the Taroku by the ancestors. The others continue to live together with their ancestors, just as they had lived before, and with the tools and weapons that were buried in the grave with them. This whole story is possibly an attempt to explain the incomprehensible manner in which a person is living and then is dead. In any event, the idea of reward or punishment after death for their actions during life is foreign to them, although their expression, "the wrath of the ancestors", which is applied to infractions of the law, seems to indicate the existence of such a concept.